United Nations S/2014/142

Security Council

Distr.: General
3 March 2014

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic submitted pursuant to paragraph 48 of Security Council resolution 2127 (2013)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 48 of Security Council resolution 2127 (2013), by which the Council requested me, in consultations with the African Union, to report to it with recommendations on the possible transformation of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) to a United Nations peacekeeping operation, including an assessment of progress made towards meeting the appropriate conditions on the ground referred to in paragraph 45 of my report of 15 November 2013 (S/2013/677).

2. In preparation of the present report, I dispatched a multidisciplinary team to the Central African Republic from 4 to 15 February 2014. A representative of the African Union Commission was part of the team. My Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, visited the Central African Republic on 11 and 12 February together with a senior official of the African Union Commission for consultations in Bangui with national and international stakeholders, including the Head of State of the Transition in the Central African Republic, ministers of her Government and representatives of civil society, regional organizations and the international community.

II. Major developments

A. Security, human rights and humanitarian developments

3. Since the assessment conducted in November, there have been dramatic changes in the situation on the ground. The attacks by anti-balaka elements against ex-Séléka forces on 5 December in Bangui and Bossangoa, which involved heavy weapons, led to a reversal in the conflict dynamic and a significant deterioration in the security situation and sparked a cycle of reprisals among civilians and clashes between anti-balaka and ex-Séléka forces throughout the country. These developments have led to a grave deterioration in the human rights situation, resulting in a serious protection crisis, with civilians being targeted by all armed groups and by civilians on the basis of their religious affiliation.

Please recycle

4. Violations that may amount to international crimes have become widespread not only in Bangui but throughout the country. These include serious violations of the rights to life, physical integrity and property, arbitrary detention, the summary execution of civilians, indiscriminate firing on civilians, sexual violence and rape and grave violations against children, including their recruitment and use, killing and maiming and sexual violence. In addition, civilians have increasingly become involved in violence, including killing and looting, in an environment marked by fear, hatred and total impunity, as well as socioeconomic deprivation. Deliberate and targeted violence forcing Muslim populations to flee may amount to the crimes against humanity of forced displacement and/or persecution.

5. The anti-balaka groups, which comprise local defence groups, rogue elements of the armed forces of the Central African Republic and criminal elements, are reportedly becoming increasingly organized in Bangui and other parts of the country and have access to firearms and heavy weapons. While their structure remains unclear, threats emanating from anti-balaka elements go well beyond law and order issues. According to both the French forces of Operation Sangaris and MISCA, anti-balaka groups now represent the main threat to civilians.

6. For much of 2013, many Central Africans suffered under the control of ex-Séléka forces, which were perceived by much of the population as being made up entirely of and as being supported by Muslims. Although this is not the case, the current wave of revenge and reprisal attacks being carried out in the name of Christians are the result of resentment stemming from months of serious human rights abuses. While the violence was not borne of religious or ethnic hatred, manipulation and exploitation by some in positions of power has injected this dimension into the conflict. The longer it is allowed to continue, the more difficult it becomes to address. There is an increasing risk that ethnic groups perceived to have supported ex-Séléka forces could become targets of anti-balaka militias.

7. Killings are reported daily in Bangui. Violence in the capital has reached gruesome levels of cruelty: corpses are mutilated in public and dismemberments and beheadings take place with total impunity. Targeted attacks by anti-balaka groups prevent Muslims from moving out of the few neighbourhoods where they have regrouped. The vast majority of the Muslim population of Bangui has fled and those Muslims who remain live under international protection.

8. The resignation on 10 January of the former Head of State of the Transition, Michel Djotodia, prompted most of the 7,000 ex-Séléka elements to leave the sites where they had regrouped in Bangui since December 2013. Approximately 1,500 armed elements remain regrouped in two sites under MISCA protection, while other elements reportedly continue to operate in civilian clothes in several neighbourhoods of Bangui. The retreat of ex-Séléka elements from Bangui and the western parts of the country has sparked renewed attacks on the remaining members, associates, perceived supporters and members of Muslim civilian communities, who are now deliberately and systematically targeted by anti-balaka elements. These attacks involve killings, targeted assassinations, sexual violence, public lynching, looting and the destruction of property. Mob violence has reached unprecedented levels. Attacks have been publicly referred to by individuals claiming to represent anti-balaka elements as "cleansing operations". There have also been incidents of anti-balaka elements using hate speech on the television and the radio.

9. Ex-Séléka elements are said to be regrouping in locations in the northern and north-eastern parts of the country, including in Kaga Bandoro, Ndélé, Bambari and Bangassou. On 30 January, ex-Séléka elements temporarily took control of the town of Sibut and reportedly announced that this marked a step towards establishing a line of demarcation between Muslim and Christian areas, raising fears of a de facto partition of the country. MISCA subsequently reinforced its deployment in the area. The movement of ex-Séléka elements was marked by significant surges in violence and human rights violations, as those forces destroyed villages, tools and seeds, conscripted forced labour and killed civilians along the way. In-fighting between rival ex-Séléka groups was also reported in a number of areas.

10. Logistical constraints and capability gaps notwithstanding, MISCA has made a significant difference in its areas of deployment in and outside Bangui, including with regard to the protection of civilians. In Bangui, MISCA operations carried out in coordination with Operation Sangaris forces were essential to restore basic security, enable the Transitional Government to resume its work while ensuring freedom of movement for international actors, secure key installations and sites of internally displaced persons and protect national and international stakeholders, including members of the transitional institutions. MISCA has also disarmed and cantoned some ex-Séléka elements. MISCA and Operation Sangaris efforts led to an increase in returns of internally displaced persons in the first weeks of February. MISCA has also collected arms, improved security on the main axis to Cameroon and provided escorts to humanitarian convoys. It has responded to situations on the basis of alerts from local populations and humanitarian actors in places such as Carnot, Berberati, Mbaiki, Bambari and Baoro. Although some interlocutors have identified the perceived partiality of some MISCA contingents as a challenge in some of these areas, MISCA has prevented near massacres and gross human rights violations and contributed to the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance.

11. However, over the past weeks, the ethnic and religious demography of the country has changed radically. Given the intensity of the violence, many Muslims have fled the country, mostly to Cameroon and Chad or to the north-eastern part of the Central African Republic. Many towns that used to have multiconfessional populations, such as Yaloke, Bossemptele, Bozoum and Mbaiki, have been emptied of their Muslim communities.

12. In the light of the dire situation and limited protection, a number of countries have organized the evacuation of their nationals. A transit site has been established in Bangui, where the national army of Chad provides security separate from MISCA. Several thousands of Muslims, including Central Africans, have been evacuated every week by plane, taxi and truck. Many of those evacuated have never lived outside the Central African Republic and have no place to settle. Heavily armed units of the national army of Chad are escorting convoys from Bangui and locations in the west to the northern part of the country and to Chad. In some cases, disproportionate use of force resulting in the death of civilians was reported.

13. At present, more than 15,000 Muslims seeking to flee to safety are taking shelter in 18 locations throughout the country, risking grievous violence if they leave. In numerous places in the north-western, western and central parts of the country, people depend for their lives on MISCA and Operation Sangaris protection. Humanitarian actors face the dilemma of whether to encourage people to stay in their communities, thereby endangering their lives, or to assist them in fleeing for

their own safety, thereby indirectly contributing to the sectarian division of the country.

14. Vulnerable groups, notably women, children and the elderly, continue to be affected disproportionately. Since November 2013, cases of sexual violence perpetrated by armed men, most of whom are believed to be ex-Séléka elements, have been reported in Bangui, Boali, Bossemptele, Damara, Mbaiki and Sibut, as well as in the prefecture of Ouham Pende. During the events of 5 and 6 December in Bangui, numerous rapes, including gang rapes, were reportedly carried out by anti-balaka and ex-Séléka elements, notably during house-to-house searches and retaliatory attacks. Forced marriages involving children have also been reported; most are believed to have been perpetrated by ex-Séléka elements. Cases of sexual violence, including rapes, have been reported at sites where internally displaced persons are located. Incidents involving the abduction of women and sexual slavery have also been reported in the countryside.

15. The grave human rights violations committed against children, particularly reports of their recruitment into armed groups, is alarming. Although precise numbers are difficult to establish, there is evidence that the March 2013 estimate according to which some 3,500 children formed part of Séléka ranks may have increased: as many as 6,000 children could be associated with armed groups. Anti-balaka elements are also reportedly recruiting children. Health centres and schools have been looted across the country and often remain closed, disrupting children's access to education and health care.

16. These developments have resulted in a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions. As at 21 February, 2.5 million people (over half the country's population) were in need of humanitarian assistance. Almost 700,000 Central Africans had been displaced within the country. More than 288,000 were refugees in neighbouring countries and more than 65,000 third-country nationals had been evacuated.

17. Humanitarian needs are immense in all sectors and are likely to increase further, while insecurity impedes aid workers from reaching all those in need. In addition, humanitarian entities are being targeted for their resources. Insecurity along the road from Cameroon, the commercial and humanitarian lifeline to Bangui, affects the delivery of supplies, including relief supplies. MISCA has started to deploy convoy escorts along the road three times a week, which has improved the situation, but demand is great and the route remains insecure. On 12 February, the World Food Programme was forced to open an air bridge from Douala, Cameroon, to Bangui, resulting in an almost eightfold increase in the cost of getting assistance to those in need.

B. Political developments

18. The resignations on 10 January of Mr. Djotodia (see para. 8 above) and the Prime Minister, Nicolas Tiangaye, during a summit of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in N'Djamena has led to a shift in the political landscape. International concerns about the effectiveness of the transitional leadership and its failure to respond to the escalation of violence have increased.

19. On 20 January, the National Transitional Council elected Catherine Samba-Panza, then Mayor of Bangui, as the new Head of State of the Transition of the Central African Republic. Since taking office, Ms. Samba-Panza has taken a number of decisive steps, including the appointment of André Nzapayeké as Prime Minister on 23 January and the formation of a new Transitional Government on 27 January. The new Government comprises 20 members, including three ex-Séléka representatives and one anti-balaka representative. The appointment of over 20 advisers has raised some concern that the office of Ms. Samba-Panza may serve as a shadow cabinet.

20. While not fully in line with the provisions of the Libreville agreements, the N'Djamena Declaration and the transition charter, the formation of the new Government was a positive development that provided new impetus to the transition. Nonetheless, it provoked dissatisfaction among ex-Séléka and anti-balaka leaders and led to a subsequent spike in violence in Bangui. The former political opposition rejected an offer to participate in the Government.

21. The transitional authorities have made additional efforts to establish the required institutional framework to organize the elections, which should conclude the transition period. On 24 December, the seven-member national elections authority was formally established but has yet to become operational. The electoral needs assessment mission that I dispatched to the Central African Republic from 28 January to 11 February concluded that the Transitional Government had declared its intention to organize elections as soon as possible. However, the capacity of national stakeholders to organize the polls within the transitional time frame will depend on their ability to establish local branches of the national elections authority throughout the country and other institutions, such as the High Council for Communication, to complete the legal framework, to restore some security and State authority across the country and disarm, at least in part, armed elements, to address the absence of civil registries and to assess the availability of resources, from both the Transitional Government and international partners, to organize the elections.

22. Determining the appropriate timing for holding elections in the Central African Republic will not only be a matter of putting into place the necessary technical capacities and legal arrangements and of providing a secure environment. It will also depend on establishing the right political environment, one in which elections will help to strengthen society and advance stability rather than be a source of conflict and social instability.

23. The violence in December has further decimated the already scarce national capacities and led to the collapse of the already weak administration. Civil servants have not been paid for five months and the State continues to have no money to pay their salaries. The capacity of the new transitional authorities to effect change will in part depend, in the immediate future, on support from the international community.

24. The situation outside Bangui is marked by the near-total absence of State administration and services. Ex-Séléka elements continue to consider themselves the legitimate representatives of the State in areas where they maintain a presence and seek to exercise State responsibilities, such as law and order and tax collection, although in many cases their actions amount to arbitrary rule and extortion. In some areas in the north-west, anti-balaka groups too are reportedly operating as de facto authorities.

25. The crisis in the Central African Republic is extremely complex. The country has experienced three internal conflicts in 10 years and its third Transitional Government in one year. The current situation is the continuation of a decades-long cycle of political and security crises. At its roots, it stems from long-standing socioeconomic, political, structural and governance deficiencies, from fragile social cohesion and from deep-seated feelings of marginalization among some communities, in particular populations in the northern part of the country, which have felt discriminated against by the central Government. These conditions have been exacerbated by corruption, nepotism, the abuse of power, internal strife, outside interference and the deteriorating capacity of the national army. This context, coupled with extremely weak State institutions, has left consecutive central governments vulnerable. The State is overwhelmed and has virtually no capacity to manage the massive array of threats it is facing and will need to be rebuilt from its foundations. There is no national army and what remains of the police and the gendarmerie lacks the basic equipment and means to exercise its duties. The State administration is absent in many places and the international community is having to substitute for the State in the delivery of basic services where possible.

C. Rule of law

Justice and corrections

26. The events in December have caused a total breakdown of law and order. Courts have been systematically destroyed and attacks have been launched on prisons, resulting in the freeing of some detainees and the killing of others and in constant threats against judges. Courts and prisons have ceased to function, although the main prison in Bangui was reopened on 14 February, following an intervention by the Head of State of the Transition. Civil servants and magistrates have abandoned their positions and it has become impossible to bring suspects to justice, detain them or even carry out arrests. Only a few representatives of law and order institutions have resumed their duties in Bangui. The penal chain has been disrupted, paralysing the proper administration of justice and contributing to large-scale impunity. The situation considerably complicates the work of the international forces.

National police and gendarmerie

27. What remained of the national police was further weakened during the December events. Stations were looted and police and gendarmerie personnel abandoned their positions. Some officers joined the ranks of ex-Séléka and anti-balaka groups. The Compagnie nationale de sécurité, one of the two operational units still in possession of firearms, was first attacked by anti-balaka elements, then disarmed by ex-Séléka forces. Most of the infrastructure has been destroyed. Police officers and gendarmes lack equipment, including radios and protection gear, and have only six vehicles.

28. Police elements have started returning to their duties and three out of eight police stations have reopened in Bangui. To date, 700 police officers (of the 1,675 said to have been working prior to December) have registered in Bangui. A Peacebuilding Fund project worth $2.5 million has been approved to support the rehabilitation of eight police commissariats and three gendarmerie brigades in

Bangui and provide some vehicles and communications equipment. On 15 January, police and gendarmerie started joint patrols with MISCA in Bangui.

29. According to the gendarmerie, 1,200 officers out of 3,500 gendarmerie personnel present before December have registered. Although the bulk of those officers are in Bangui, 226 police personnel are operating outside the capital, including in Boali, Bossemptele, Yaloke, Mbaiki, Nola, Berberati, Bouar, Bangassou, Mobaye, Obo and Bambari.

Disarmament

30. The retreat of the majority of the previously regrouped ex-Séléka elements is a setback for the planning of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities. At the same time, the threat posed by anti-balaka and other, already existing or newly emerging, armed groups means that new approaches for managing them are required. There are worrying reports that the prospect of taking part in a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in the future is becoming an incentive for some to take up arms.

31. While it remains challenging to plan a formal disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for ex-Séléka elements, these elements are indicating a willingness to regroup and enter into such a process. Those currently regrouped lack sufficient food, shelter and access to medical facilities.

32. Under the new Transitional Government, responsibility for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration has shifted to the Ministry of Defence. While a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration strategy was adopted on 15 November 2013, it needs to be revised to reflect the new realities on the ground. The need to address the security challenges unique to the Central African Republic, including the presence of anti-balaka and other community-based militias or groups, will require the design and implementation of a creative, tailored programme that could include some combination of community violence reduction, emergency employment, social cohesion and reconciliation activities. Such a tailored programme would need to be designed through a close collaboration between the Government and the United Nations. There should be an immediate focus on measures that can have a quick impact on the security situation, including measures aimed at disarming and cantoning armed elements, while longer-term and more comprehensive and sustainable disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes are developed. Contributions of partners to early recovery and social cohesion programmes aimed at restoring livelihoods will be critical for breaking the cycle of insecurity and violence at the community level.

Reconstitution of the national defence and security forces

33. Efforts have been made to identify and regroup former elements of the armed forces of the Central African Republic. On 5 February, 6,500 of the 8,434 elements that used to make up the armed forces responded to a call by the Head of State of the Transition to gather at the École Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature. Aside from the lack of financial and logistical resources, the public lynching of a member of the armed forces who had been an ex-Séléka element minutes after the public ceremony at which the Head of State of the Transition officially assumed control over the army illustrates the deep divisions that exist within the armed forces and the need to restructure them from their foundations. The new Minister of

Defence has indicated a desire to create an army that is representative of the whole population and, in doing so, to include ex-Séléka members. However, any integration into the army should take place within the parameters of a political framework that lays out the basic preconditions for integration, including vetting for human rights or other abuses.

Mine action

34. In December 2012, the United Nations recorded stockpiles that included 11,654 items of obsolete ammunition, explosive remnants of war and 165,934 items of small arms ammunition. During the inspection of those stockpiles in November 2013, it was established that 83 per cent of the obsolete ammunition and explosive remnants and 99 per cent of the ammunition holdings had disappeared. There are concerns that much of these items are currently in the hands of the armed groups and civilians.

D. Socioeconomic situation

35. Before the most recent crisis, the Central African Republic ranked 180th of 186 countries on the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme. Since then, the socioeconomic situation in the country has deteriorated markedly. The crisis has negatively affected the economy and is expected to have long-term consequences for the people despite the country's wealth of natural resources. The massive movement of Muslim populations, traditionally at the centre of the small-scale trade and commerce sectors, has resulted in a shortage of goods, including medicines, and has also caused a significant increase in market prices. Most of the goods are imported through the principal road linking the Central African Republic to Cameroon but insecurity has blocked free passage.

36. Public finances have collapsed. According to projections of the International Monetary Fund, the gross domestic product contracted by 14.5 per cent in 2013 and the inflation rate stood at 12 per cent. The account deficit totalled 5.6 per cent of the gross domestic product in 2013. The most pronounced poverty is found in rural areas. A total of 75 per cent of the population relies on small-scale agriculture for food and income. A lack of seeds and tools, combined with continued insecurity, is likely to have a significant negative impact on agriculture production and commodity prices, and heighten the real risk of a food and nutrition crisis.

37. The World Bank, through a restructuring of its current operations and additional financing, has committed some $100 million in support of emergency response efforts, including rapid support to the public sector. The World Bank, the European Union and the International Monetary Fund intend to re-engage with authorities to discuss direct budget support. However, the ability to re-engage with national authorities will depend on the prevailing security situation in the country.

38. The combination of widespread poverty, disruptions to commerce and agriculture, continued insecurity in many parts of the country, large-scale population displacements and the total absence of public services by the Government leaves the population and country extremely vulnerable to a looming and even deeper socioeconomic and humanitarian crisis.

E. Subregional aspects

39. The subregion, under ECCAS leadership, has remained actively engaged in fostering a solution to the current crisis, including through efforts led by the President of Chad and Chair of ECCAS, Idriss Deby Itno, and the President of Congo and Chair of the Follow-up Committee on the Inclusive Political Dialogue in the Central African Republic, Denis Sassou Nguesso, as well as through the provision of temporary financial support to pay the salaries of civil servants. A joint ECCAS-African Union delegation comprising the Foreign Ministers of Chad and Congo, the Minister of Defence of Congo and the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security visited Bangui on 28 December 2013 to stress the need for cohesion and effective unity of action among all stakeholders.

40. ECCAS, working in close coordination with the African Union, responded to the deteriorating situation by convening the Sixth Extraordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of ECCAS, held in N'Djamena on 9 and 10 January. During that meeting, the former Head of State of the Transition, Mr. Djotodia, announced his resignation. In a subsequent communiqué, ECCAS Heads of State and Government regretted the passivity of the political class in the Central African Republic and the lack of unity within the Transitional Government and called for the swift election of a new Head of State of the Transition. They also asked the ECCAS secretariat and the African Union Commission to examine the modalities of the organization of the National Reconciliation Conference, under the auspices of the mediator. On 29 January, the African Union Peace and Security Council took note of the decisions taken by ECCAS at the Sixth Extraordinary Summit and urged the international community, including the United Nations, to provide all necessary support to the efforts of the leaders of the region to facilitate an effective international action in support of the Central African Republic.

41. The crisis has affected neighbouring countries, where more than 288,000 Central Africans have sought refuge, almost 54,600 of them since December 2013. There are continuing reports of the presence of foreign fighters in the Central African Republic, including Boko Haram elements and others who crossed the border from Darfur and other regions. The dissolution of State authority and the commission of crimes against the Muslim minority have created conditions that extremist groups from inside and outside the subregion could seek to exploit. In order to promote the long-term stability and economic development of the Central African Republic, it is critical that such groups not be allowed to take advantage of the current chaotic conditions and establish a foothold in the country.

III. International security response

A. African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic

42. On 13 December, following consultations on the margins of the Elysée Summit for Peace and Security in Africa, held in Paris on 6 and 7 December, the African Union Peace and Security Council authorized an increase in MISCA strength from 4,500 to 6,000 uniformed personnel. Pursuant to the agreement reached by the African Union and ECCAS, authority was transferred from the Mission of ECCAS

for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic to MISCA on 19 December 2013. MISCA expedited its force generation process and managed to reach its full strength by early February, although some critical capabilities have yet to be deployed.

43. As at 21 February, MISCA strength stood at 6,032 uniformed personnel, including 5,404 military personnel and 628 police personnel forming four formed police units. The latter started foot patrols in Bangui, as their vehicles have yet to be deployed. The MISCA civilian component comprises 35 personnel (compared with the 152 envisaged in the concept of operations) specialized in political affairs, humanitarian liaison, human rights and mission support. Liaison mechanisms have been established to promote coordination between MISCA and Operation Sangaris forces, as well as with the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army, deployed in Obo Province, south-eastern Central African Republic. Since his appointment as Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Head of MISCA, Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko has worked closely with my Special Representative and Head of the Integrated United Nations Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), Babacar Gaye, and other stakeholders to address the unfolding crisis. MISCA achievements have been made at the cost of great sacrifices, including 17 fatalities and 118 wounded.

44. Its swift deployment notwithstanding, MISCA faces significant challenges in terms of air mobility, information and communications systems, intelligence capacity, medical facilities and logistics supply and sustainment. Given the poor state of the road infrastructure, the absence of enablers and multipliers such as signal units, engineering capacity, heavy transport equipment and utility helicopters hampers the mission's operations. There is an urgent need for enablers and force multipliers to enable MISCA to conduct operations more effectively.

45. The United Nations, together with France and the United States of America, is deploying military and civilian experts to work with MISCA to strengthen its command and control and administrative structures, improve its information and communications technology infrastructure and provide training. During a donors conference held by the African Union on 1 February, donors pledged approximately $316 million in support of the Central African Republic, including MISCA. The MISCA budget for 2014 amounts to $409 million. Using the trust fund, the United Nations is upgrading MISCA information and communications capabilities. On 20 and 26 February, the United Nations sent two aircraft to Bangui carrying 1,200 very high frequency hand-held radios, 25 repeaters and other assorted items of information and communications technology and power-generation equipment. The United Nations has also deployed experts to install the equipment and train MISCA personnel to use it.

B. Operation Sangaris and the deployment of the European Union force

46. Operation Sangaris of France deployed to the Central African Republic on 6 December with the aim of restoring minimum security conditions in Bangui and supporting the build-up of the MISCA force. A total of 2,000 Operation Sangaris military personnel are deployed in Bangui and in hotspots in the western and

northern parts of the country, including in the towns of Berberati, Yaloke, Boda and Bambari and in Vakaga prefecture.

47. On 10 February, the Council of the European Union established a European Union military operation in the Central African Republic, which is to contribute to a safe and secure environment in the Bangui area for up to six months, with a view to handing over to partners. The force is expected to commence deployment early in March and begin operations soon thereafter.

C. Immediate measures

48. The continued deterioration in the security situation, in particular the widespread killings and pervasive threats to civilians described above, demands the focused attention of and urgent action by the international community. On 20 February, I proposed to the Security Council a new six-point initiative designed to stop the violence and killings, protect civilians, prevent the de facto partition of the country, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and provide the Government with some urgently needed support. The initiative calls for the rapid reinforcement of the African Union and French forces on the ground and the deployment of additional troops and police personnel; the provision of logistical and financial support to African forces; the coordinated command of the international forces, with a narrowly focused mission to prevent killings and protect civilians; a rapid infusion of tangible support to the Government of the Central African Republic; the acceleration of a political and reconciliation process for the country; and urgent and full funding for humanitarian operations.

49. Even as we lay the groundwork for a future United Nations peacekeeping operation, it is critical that all actors focus on the most urgent, high-priority objectives, namely halting the violence against innocent civilians, protecting civilians and providing relief to those in need. Achieving these objectives will require the contribution of many actors. I urge Member States, regional organizations and other key partners to make tangible contributions to ensure the success of this initiative through the provision of military and police personnel, funding for humanitarian operations, financial and material support to MISCA and the Government of the Central African Republic, as well as political support to the peace and reconciliation process.

IV. Conditions for the United Nations peacekeeping operation to operate successfully

50. In my report on the Central African Republic dated 15 November 2013 (S/2013/677), I outlined a number of conditions that need to be present on the ground in order for a United Nations peacekeeping operation to operate successfully. They include the need for the transition to remain in place and for the Transitional Government to demonstrate its commitment to the process and take concrete steps to implement the agreed framework. The new Head of State of the Transition and her Government have taken encouraging steps to demonstrate their commitment to moving the process forward and addressing immediate challenges, including the reopening of the prison in Bangui and negotiations on the payment of salaries of civil servants. There is hope that the new leadership will put the transition process

back on track and create conditions conducive to the holding of elections. However, the fragility of the current political framework, which has not been fully adhered to and is overtaken by events, has been identified as a major risk for any future peacekeeping operation.

51. With regard to the reconstitution of the national security institutions, distinguishing between forces officially representing the State security apparatus and forces acting outside of any legal framework requires, first and foremost, a national vision with regard to security and rule of law institutions throughout the country and the future composition of the armed forces, including criteria for the integration of its members and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former armed elements. Although some progress has been made at the technical level, building consensus around such a vision is fundamentally a political process that has yet to take place.

52. The situation in the Central African Republic has changed drastically, as described above. While the current and future political contexts in the country are important long-term success factors for the mission, the most important and urgent consideration is the protection of civilians and the creation of a secure environment throughout the country. Consequently, I am proposing the rapid deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation to address the key security challenges in the country.

V. Recommendations for the possible transformation of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic into a United Nations peacekeeping operation

53. In a letter dated 27 January 2014, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic requested that a United Nations peacekeeping operation be deployed to stabilize the country and address the civilian aspects of the crisis. The Head of State of the Transition reiterated the request in the meeting with my Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations held in Bangui on 12 February.

54. In a letter dated 17 February 2014, the Chairperson of the African Union noted that the deployment of MISCA was aimed at facilitating a broader and more sustainable international engagement in the Central African Republic, which would include the deployment of a United Nations operation in due course, once the required conditions had been created on the ground. Expressing the hope that, within 6-9 months, the initial stabilization phase would be completed, the African Union expressed the view that the precise time frame should be determined on the basis of regular joint assessments of the situation.

A. Deployment of the proposed peacekeeping mission

55. The challenges that confront the Central African Republic run deep and are not given to easy solutions. In spite of the progressive effectiveness of MISCA and Operation Sangaris, the current deployment of international security forces is not sufficient and lacks the civilian component to adequately protect civilians under

imminent threat or to tackle the root causes of the conflict. Addressing the crisis in the Central African Republic requires a unified and integrated approach through the deployment of a multidimensional peacekeeping operation, with the protection of civilians as its utmost priority. An important factor that has influenced my decision to recommend the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation is that the Organization is uniquely positioned to deploy and sustain a multidimensional peacekeeping operation with the full range of capacities that are required to address the deep-rooted nature of the complex crisis now unfolding in the Central African Republic.

56. In the early stages of its deployment, a United Nations peacekeeping operation will need to focus its efforts on the most urgent priorities and to provide some immediate dividends to the population in the areas of security, protection of civilians, human rights and justice, building on the progress made by MISCA and Operation Sangaris. In the long term, in order for the United Nations to make a lasting difference in the Central African Republic, it will need to support national efforts to break the cycle of recurring political and security crises and to contribute to establishing the conditions for long-term stability and social and economic development.

57. The objectives and priorities of a United Nations operation, and hence its configuration and activities, should be adjusted over time to the particular conditions and needs of the country and its people. Thus, the objectives of the United Nations peacekeeping operation during the early phase of its deployment will focus on providing a secure environment, a sine qua non for progress in other areas, supporting the Transitional Government to exercise basic State functions, supporting peace and reconciliation efforts, protecting basic human rights and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance. As conditions evolve in the country and, in particular, as the security situation improves and national security capabilities develop, the objectives of the United Nations mission will shift to focus increasingly on supporting the extension of State authority and the State's ability to deliver public services, the consolidation of a stable political environment, the reconciliation of communities and the return of people to their homes, the development of rule of law institutions and the promotion of respect for human rights. An exit strategy, which will have to be based on progress made in building national capacities, will need to be determined from the outset.

58. The work of the United Nations in the Central African Republic must be based on a clear understanding of the current situation and be tailored to the future needs of its people. A "fit-for-purpose" approach is required, focusing on a strong, flexible and mobile countrywide deployment of uniformed personnel and civilians that will allow the mission to prevent and respond to security threats as they evolve, while giving the necessary attention to priorities in its civilian activities. Critical benchmarks will be built into the mandate at every stage of the mission so as to enable it to move as rapidly as possible from entry to stabilization, consolidation and a sustainable exit.

59. Because of the unique circumstances of the Central African Republic, the approach taken in military, police and civilian deployments must be phased in a deliberate manner and be linked to the priority objectives of the mission. To deal with immediate security needs, there will be an initial surge of military personnel and corresponding military enablers. Alongside this initial military surge, essential

civilian capacities will be deployed, phased in gradually as the situation stabilizes and as the necessary living and working facilities are developed, and more work can be undertaken on civilian tasks. Police will also be phased in and, as the security environment improves, should eventually replace the bulk of the initial military surge capacity. While a large, initial military deployment will be necessary to address the security challenges, it is envisaged that United Nations military forces would progressively draw down as quickly as conditions permit, allowing the United Nations to focus as much of its efforts as possible on critical civilian, State-building tasks. System-wide assessments will be conducted to further refine and elaborate the overall United Nations response. Efforts will be necessary from the outset of the mission to manage the expectations of the population through a strong communications strategy.

B. Mandate of the proposed mission in the Central African Republic

60. It is recommended that, operating under a Chapter VII authorization, the mandate of the proposed United Nations peacekeeping operation include: (a) the protection of civilians; (b) the protection of United Nations personnel, installations and equipment and ensuring the security and freedom of movement of United Nations and associated personnel; (c) support for the political process and key elements of the transition, including the restoration of State authority and its extension throughout the territory; (d) the creation of security conditions conducive to the delivery of principled humanitarian assistance and the safe, voluntary and sustainable return of internally displaced persons and refugees; (e) the promotion and protection of human rights; (f) the promotion of a national dialogue, mediation and reconciliation at all levels; and (g) support for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former armed elements, with specific attention to children, and the repatriation of foreign elements, as well as community violence-reduction programmes.

61. Additional tasks should include: (a) support for the organization and conduct of elections; (b) support for security sector reform; (c) support for the police, justice and correctional institutions to reinstate the criminal justice system; (d) mine action, monitoring of weapons and ammunition trafficking and stockpile management; (e) coordination of international efforts in support of enhancing good governance, including the development of sound fiscal policies and natural resources management; and (f) institution-building and laying the groundwork for long-term socioeconomic recovery.

62. It is important to stress that not all of these activities will be carried out in equal proportions at all stages of the peacekeeping mission's presence. On the contrary, the mission will need to regularly adjust its priority activities, and hence its configuration, to the circumstances on the ground.

C. Tasks to be fulfilled by the United Nations mission

Protection of civilians

63. The key focus of the United Nations mission in the initial stage must be the protection of civilians. This requires military and civilian expertise in civil-military coordination, liaison with local populations, gender expertise, human rights

monitoring and reporting, integrated common threat analysis and early warning capabilities at the national and local levels, together with the design of coherent coordination mechanisms, including with the humanitarian protection cluster. Such focus should go hand-in-hand with the deployment of specialized civilian capabilities to restart immediately a minimally functional criminal justice chain through the robust deployment of justice and corrections functions.

Military component

64. As indicated in my briefing to the Security Council on 20 February, considering the military threats and virtually non-existent national security apparatus, more troops are needed in the Central African Republic to address the situation in the initial phase of the peacekeeping operation. The proposed concept of operations has been developed on the assumption that the force is deployed with a robust mandate and adequate resources with the capacity to react adequately to changing circumstances and pre-empt potentially destabilizing events. The military component should be progressively reduced as critical benchmarks are met.

65. It is envisaged that the strength of the peacekeeping operation would comprise up to 10,000 troops and 1,820 police personnel, including the required capacities and enablers. The proposed force levels have been defined by a number of factors, which include the need to have a balanced and deterrent presence throughout the country, to protect civilians, to monitor border areas, to support the transition; to secure major lines of mobility and communication, in particular the main supply route from Cameroon, to support the delivery of humanitarian assistance where appropriate and to safeguard United Nations personnel and installations.

66. In addition to eight infantry battalions, there is a requirement for a properly constituted reserve and key assets such as logistics, aviation and engineers. In addition, it is recommended that the force may contribute at a later stage, in partnership with others, to the broader effort to reconstitute the national defence and security forces, which will be critical for the United Nations exit strategy. Depending on the role that the force will eventually take on, the deployment of additional capability such as a training assistance unit could be considered in due course. Particular emphasis is placed on the military observers, including female officers who can reach out and liaise with local communities, in coordination with a strong civil affairs component, and carry out the vital task of monitoring cross border movements. The employment of technology for surveillance operations to assist in the early warning of threats to civilians and United Nations personnel and in monitoring key areas of instability will be important to enhance mandate implementation, improve the safety and security of United Nations personnel and reduce resource requirements.

67. The United Nations operation will be expected, in an initial phase, to continue MISCA efforts to provide security to key installations and national stakeholders in Bangui. However, the mission's capacity to provide security to key national stakeholders, including members of the Transitional Government and magistrates, will be limited. It is therefore recommended that the police component assist in building the capacity of the national police and the gendarmerie in providing close protection.

Police component

68. To address the current situation of violence and impunity, a military response alone, no matter how robust, will not be sufficient. I therefore recommend that the proposed mission include a United Nations police component with a focused mandate and supporting capabilities to protect civilians and support the resumption of activities of the national police and the gendarmerie. The United Nations policing intervention will face critical challenges, such as the rapid generation of specialist capacities such as crowd control, to undertake reform and restructuring activities. Individual police officers and formed police units will be generated and deployed, including through a rehatting of MISCA police in keeping with United Nations policies. The United Nations police concept envisages that the initial deployment will be in Bangui, with a view to expanding outside the capital as security and other conditions permit. The focus of the police component's activities, and its deployment, will be adjusted to the particular requirements on the ground, as with other components.

69. Stabilizing the security situation requires addressing impunity and bolstering confidence in the justice system. The proposed mission should therefore also assist in mobilizing and coordinating international donor support to provide essential infrastructure, equipment and logistics for the law enforcement institutions and support national authorities in their training, reform, restructuring and development, within the context of a national security sector reform strategy. Serious consideration should be given to the adoption of urgent temporary measures in the security and rule of law areas to avoid a continuation of the total impunity that currently exists in the country.

Civilian component

70. While the deployment of a robust, capable, military force is critical to addressing the urgent security challenges in the country, it is civilians who will need to work hand in hand with partners to assist the Government and the people of the Central African Republic as they seek to build their State. Civilian efforts should focus on the protection of civilians, reconciliation, facilitating the political process, and building the State's capacity to address the most pressing challenges and needs of the population.

71. Progress on the political front will be of paramount importance to ensure that the transition process remains on track, while creating conditions conducive to the rebuilding of the national army, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, comprehensive security sector reform, reconciliation and the development of democratic institutions. The deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation would provide unity of effort and the leverage to promote a political process and address the root causes of the conflict. This will require a strong good offices role for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as an important analytical capacity.

72. The deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation should be an opportunity to revitalize a meaningful political process, in support of regional efforts, in order to build a national consensus around the future armed forces and create the conditions for the holding of free, fair and inclusive elections, including a level playing field for all candidates. Peacekeeping missions have demonstrated in the past that their support can be critical to transparent and democratic processes.

73. The recent crisis has further divided and destroyed the social fabric of the Central African Republic. A United Nations peacekeeping operation should support initiatives throughout the country, in close coordination with the United Nations country team and other partners, including religious and community leaders, to extend State authority, resolve local tensions and promote local conflict resolution, mediation and reconciliation efforts in order to enhance the environment for peaceful coexistence and the voluntary and sustainable return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

74. The Central African authorities require extensive technical and capacity-building support to ensure that State institutions are sufficiently equipped to address the most urgent challenges and needs of the population. Support to national institutions both at the central and local levels, in partnership with the United Nations country team and others, should constitute a critical focus of the peacekeeping mission. A strong civil affairs presence in the regions should provide critical support to the local authorities, including in the lead-up to an eventual electoral process.

75. A strong communications and public information component would contribute to easing tensions and promoting reconciliation throughout the country. The establishment of a United Nations radio capacity covering the entire country is recommended given the complex political context within which the mission will be operating, the weakness of the country's media sector and the extremely high expectations in the Central African Republic pertaining to the deployment of a multidimensional peacekeeping operation.

76. To support a stabilization of the security situation, the mission should facilitate the reopening and rehabilitation of existing courts, prisons, police stations and related infrastructure. It should also support the operation of secure and safe prisons in line with international minimum standards, including by building the capacity of prison personnel; the regular judicial review of pretrial detainees; the establishment of mobile courts; and support for the expansion of legal aid throughout the country. Support will be provided within the framework of the global focal point on justice, police and corrections through joint programming where appropriate, and in coordination with international partners.

77. I recommend the inclusion in the proposed mission of substantial justice and corrections components. Their mandate should include the coordination of international assistance. These components will work with national and international actors and help ensure that these public services are provided impartially and without discrimination.

78. I also recommend that a small embargo cell be established within the proposed peacekeeping operation comprising experts on arms, natural resources and customs in order to support the group of experts in monitoring the sanctions regime and to advise my Special Representative.

79. The proposed peacekeeping operation should also play a role in support of the Government in providing expert advice with regard to security sector reform and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed elements.

80. From the outset, the mission will require a strong human rights component to focus on the fight against impunity, accountability and transitional justice. The human rights component will also monitor and publicly report on violations of

international human rights law and have a robust outreach capability, as well as investigative and reporting capacities.

81. Human rights deployments to high-risk areas will contribute to the mission-wide effort to protect civilians, enhance deterrence and advise on mission responses to identified threats and preventive engagement with potential perpetrators, in close cooperation with the military and police components. The human rights component will support the implementation of the recommendations of the International Commission of Inquiry in order to help the national authorities fight impunity and devise transitional justice options. Addressing impunity and supporting accountability for human rights violations will be one of the main areas of focus. This will entail targeted programmes to support judicial institutions in swiftly investigating and prosecuting human rights cases. Programmes will also be required to support access to justice for victims and restore the capacities of civil society to engage on human rights promotion and protection. Helping to provide a secure environment to judicial authorities, courts and prisons will be equally important to ending impunity and creating an environment conducive to respect for human rights. The human rights component will also assist in strengthening national human rights institutions and capacities.

82. The systematic and widespread recruitment and use of children will require, in the initial phase of the mission, a robust response through the deployment of a strong child protection capability, which would complement the programmatic efforts of the United Nations Children's Fund to monitor and report on grave violations against children, separate children from armed groups and mainstream child protection concerns within the United Nations response. There are indications that sexual violence is employed as part of systematic attacks against civilian populations. There will be a need for a strong capacity to address this issue including through the deployment of advisers with women and child protection expertise, notably in the human rights and gender units.

83. Humanitarian access is extremely challenging owing to the prevailing insecurity, which is also the most significant impediment to the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. A United Nations peacekeeping operation will need to make a positive contribution to the restoration of security and the free movement of goods and people, which would facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance and the voluntary and sustainable return of displaced persons and refugees. While promoting an integrated approach to the crisis, it will be important to ensure a distinction between political and security efforts on the one hand and humanitarian operations on the other hand, so that humanitarian assistance can be provided throughout the country in a manner that is in keeping with humanitarian principles and is perceived as impartial and independent by the people.

84. The development of sound fiscal policies and good economic governance will be critical for the functioning of the State and its ability to deliver. The United Nations mission will cooperate closely with international financial institutions to support the Government in these areas. In particular, it will be necessary to ensure that the natural resources of the Central African Republic can be harnessed effectively to contribute to the restoration of State authority in Bangui and beyond, as well as to the stabilization of the country through the provision of infrastructure and basic social services. The United Nations will consult with the Government and partners to determine how best to assist in this area and, in particular, what role the

United Nations mission might play in ensuring the collection of customs revenues and other revenues associated with the exploitation of natural resources.

85. The proposed peacekeeping operation will only succeed if the region continues to play an important and complementary role, including through the mediation of President Sassou Nguesso, ECCAS and the African Union. The mission should therefore work closely with and provide full political support to the African Union and ECCAS, as well as limited operational support within its means, capabilities and authorities, so that they can continue to play a role in stabilizing the country. This may include support to the deployment of African Union and ECCAS human rights and military observers and other support, as appropriate. While there will be no rehatting of civilian MISCA personnel, it is recommended that an African Union liaison capacity be established within the new mission.

86. All support provided by the United Nations will be in strict compliance with the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces (A/67/775-S/2013/110).

D. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

87. The principal threats to United Nations staff are expected to derive from continued violence between armed groups, mob violence and increased criminality, as well as from efforts to provide resources for armed activity, with vehicles in high demand. United Nations national staff are at particular risk. They are indiscriminately targeted on the basis of their religious affiliation and because they are perceived to be wealthier than the average population by virtue of their United Nations employment. While, so far, the United Nations has not been targeted specifically, one national staff member was killed on the basis of his religious affiliation. Attacks targeting United Nations personnel cannot be ruled out should the proposed mission be perceived to be undermining the interests of specific groups or if the United Nations is perceived as partial.

88. Prevailing threats and the absence of the national security apparatus will require a significant security component with high-quality personnel and a strong analytical capacity. While United Nations personnel should not take undue risks, it is critical in the context of the Central African Republic that the mission adopt an enabling posture, allowing the United Nations to deliver on its mandate.

E. Support considerations

89. Mounting and sustaining a large, highly decentralized multidimensional mission in a landlocked country with extremely poor infrastructure will be a daunting challenge. Building the necessary capacity to support the planned deployments (working and living accommodations with the necessary security features; information, communications and technology capabilities; medical services; air and land transportation infrastructure and vehicles) and putting in place supply chains for food, water, fuel and other material, will take time to accomplish and be costly. The phased deployment of the mission's components will not only need to be synchronized with the priorities for mandate delivery but will also need to match the mission's ability to receive and support personnel and units.

90. The internal road network is poor and largely impassable during the extended rainy seasons. This will complicate deployment and increase reliance on air transport. The airfields outside Bangui are generally in poor condition. Consequently, the mission will initially have to rely heavily on helicopters for a wide range of operational tasks. As it is expected that the mission will be present in the country for a prolonged period, however, it will make some significant investments early on in air field upgrades to allow for greater use of fixed-wing aeroplanes. This will enhance operational performance, increase the safety of flight operations and save money in the long run.

91. Local commercial construction capability will not be able to cope with the surge in the construction that is required to establish the mission. A surge of engineering, transport and support capacity will be essential at the outset, while self-sustained military enabling units must arrive first and in the shortest time frame possible. The degree to which Member States are willing to provide military construction engineers at the early stages of deployment will have a significant impact on the mission's ability to develop the required facilities. After a heavy focus on construction during the initial phases of deployment, it is expected that some engineering units will be able to repatriate as the focus of the mission's activities evolves. To augment the military enabling capacity so that the mission can be mounted in the shortest time possible, partnerships with other United Nations agencies will be pursued.

92. The mission's deployment will be underpinned by the principles of the global field support strategy. I will also instruct my Special Representative and Headquarters departments to use all the authorities available to me and the Secretariat to get the mission standing as a matter of priority, especially in the areas of human resources and service delivery, notably with regard to construction and engineering services.

F. Transition

93. Building on the lessons learned from previous transformations of regional operations into United Nations peacekeeping missions and taking into account specific challenges on the ground, it will take the United Nations approximately six months to prepare the deployment of its operation. In order for the United Nations mission to be ready and to ensure a smooth transition, it is recommended that the Secretariat, in coordination with the African Union Commission, immediately deploy a transition team, with MISCA and BINUCA participation, to the Central African Republic with the task of establishing the proposed peacekeeping operation and preparing for a transfer of authority by 15 September. As an immediate priority, the team would develop strategic plans, most importantly a mission concept and related concepts of operations and support plans, while initiating the construction of necessary facilities, including the mission's headquarters, camps and field offices throughout the country. This would entail the immediate deployment of requisite civilian capacities, including air assets and engineers. The team should also assist in the early recruitment of civilian capacities with the required language skills.

94. While the Secretariat should initiate force generation with a particular focus on the necessary military enablers and police, the team would work with MISCA to support the strengthening of its contingents and to address critical gaps for possible

rehatting into the peacekeeping operation, including through the use of the dedicated trust fund. The facilities provided and services delivered by the team would be made available to the MISCA troops identified for rehatting to the United Nations mission. In that regard, the team would seek to prioritize the establishment of rations, water and fuel supply lines in preparation for the incoming United Nations forces. These supplies would be made available to the relevant MISCA forces as soon as possible to assist them in developing their operational capability in preparation for their joining the United Nations mission. Similarly, while the team would need to quickly put in place an aviation capability so that it could begin its work around the country, the United Nations would agree to transport MISCA personnel on its aircraft on a "space available" basis and without compromising United Nations operations.

VI. Observations

95. I am deeply concerned about the dramatic deterioration in the situation in the Central African Republic. The staggering level of violence and massive displacement are changing the country's demography with potentially long-term consequences. The attacks by anti-balaka militias in December in Bangui against ex-Séléka elements reversed the conflict dynamic and sparked a vicious cycle of reprisals among civilians and clashes between armed militias that deeply affect civilians throughout the country. International efforts, in particular the swift deployment of MISCA and the French forces of Operation Sangaris, were critical to saving the lives of civilians. I commend the African Union and the French forces for their quick deployment. I pay tribute to their dedication and courage to implement their mandates in difficult circumstances and extend my sympathy to the families of those who lost their lives in the service of peace. I welcome the decision to increase the number of international forces, including through the temporary deployment of a European Union force. I urge European and other leaders to commit additional troops and police personnel during this critical interim phase.

96. I am encouraged by the swift formation of the Transitional Government under the leadership of the new Head of State of the Transition, Catherine Samba-Panza, and her expressed willingness to tackle the multiple and daunting challenges ahead. The Transitional Government will, however, need the sustained engagement of its neighbours, the region and the broader international community to steer the country out of the current crisis. The United Nations and the international community at large stand ready to support the Central African Republic. First and foremost, however, it is the responsibility of Central Africans themselves to find a solution to the suffering inflicted on their country. I therefore call on all Central African stakeholders to seize the opportunity of this transition period to address the immediate challenges facing the country, cease the violence and restore the country's tradition of peaceful coexistence, while laying the groundwork for sustainable peace and stability. I encourage them to cooperate fully with MISCA and other international forces, as well as with my Special Representative on the ground and the proposed peacekeeping mission, once it deploys.

97. Despite the presence of international forces, violence and widespread human rights violations continue to take place throughout the country. It is clear that we, the international community, have not yet done enough to help the people of the Central African Republic to confront this crisis, which began long before the Séléka rebellion of 24 March 2013. The time to act is now. This is why I have presented the

Security Council with a six-point initiative proposing immediate measures to stop the violence and killings, protect civilians, prevent the de facto partition of the country, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and provide the Transitional Government with urgently needed support. I once again urge the Council to support these proposals, as a vital bridging measure, pending the eventual deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

98. The challenges in the Central African Republic are immense and multifaceted. The response to the crisis must be comprehensive, multidimensional and sustained in order to help stabilize the country, restore law and order and rebuild State institutions that can secure the country and protect the people. This is not the first time that the United Nations will have deployed peacekeepers in the Central African Republic. As the lessons learned from the past clearly demonstrate, the United Nations must, in order to have an impact on the ground, be given a strong role. This includes supporting the reforms needed to address the root causes of the crisis and helping to rebuild the State and its institutions so that the Central African Republic can finally break free from the recurring cycle of political instability, violence and poverty. The United Nations mission foresees strong and close cooperation with the World Bank, the African Development Bank and other financial institutions in rebuilding the Central African Republic.

99. The peacekeeping mission, whose main goals and tasks are outlined in the present report, would be tailored to the circumstances on the ground. Its military footprint would decrease as soon as the situation permits, while its police component would gradually increase. Its civilian staffing would be flexibly managed on the basis of priority tasks, which would also evolve in response to the situation on the ground.

100. We must recognize that there will be no quick fix in the Central African Republic. Responding to the crisis will require time and resources. The scale of the needs in the country is daunting. Progress in any one area will not be sustainable without significant and simultaneous engagement in other areas. Further postponement of a sustainable multidimensional response may well carry even greater human and financial costs. The potential division of the country along sectarian lines and the creation of a fertile breeding ground for extremist groups are real risks, with potentially far-reaching implications for the stability of the region and beyond.

101. There will be no solution to the crisis in the Central African Republic without the continued active engagement of the country's neighbours and the region. I call on them and the wider international community to increase their efforts in support of the Central African Republic, taking into account their respective comparative advantages, while seeking to leverage partnerships and regional initiatives.

102. A strong MISCA will help address the immediate security challenges faced by the population and facilitate the transition to a United Nations peacekeeping operation. MISCA, however, still lacks critical capabilities to achieve its full potential. I call on bilateral partners and Member States to urgently provide MISCA with rapid and generous financial and material support, including for the payment of its personnel and for the reimbursement of major military equipment.

103. I recommend that the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, authorize the deployment of a multidimensional

United Nations peacekeeping operation whose mandate is in line with the recommendations contained in paragraphs 60 and 61 and with adequate resources. The aim would be for the bulk of MISCA to transition to a United Nations peacekeeping operation, along with other contributors in accordance with the human rights screening policy and capabilities, in order to reach an authorized strength of 10,000 military personnel, including 240 military observers and 200 staff officers, and up to 1,820 civilian police officers, with 10 formed police units comprising 1,400 formed police unit personnel, 400 individual police officers and 20 seconded corrections officers. These would be deployed together with a significant civilian component and necessary support staff. This strength would be reviewed on a regular basis, leading to appropriate recommendations to the Council. With the establishment of the peacekeeping operation, BINUCA would cease to exist.

104. Many of the problems facing the Central African Republic exceed the capacities of a United Nations peacekeeping operation, considering the complexities of the crisis, the absence of the security apparatus and the almost non-existent capacity of the State. Deploying a United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic should therefore be part of a broader long-term engagement of the international community. Success in this broader effort to help the Government and people of the Central African Republic to rebuild a State will depend on the contributions and commitments of many actors, most importantly Central Africans themselves.

105. In addition to the Government's request for the deployment of a peacekeeping operation, its deployment must come with a political commitment from national stakeholders to engage in an inclusive political process aimed at creating an environment that is conducive to the creation of a new army; the rebuilding of the police and the gendarmerie; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts; reconciliation; and the conduct of inclusive, fair and transparent elections. The mission's deployment should be used as an opportunity to review the transitional framework in an inclusive manner. National actors should commit formally to a process that produces a consensual vision for a future republican army that is representative of the nation's diversity. They should also consider strengthening international mechanisms, such as the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic and the technical follow-up committee, which could be given additional scope to facilitate the transition process, with an important role for key regional and international actors, as well as the United Nations, and could function as an international committee to accompany the transition.

106. The international community must commit to working together and to providing to the Central African Republic the assistance necessary to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of our actions, based on our respective comparative advantages. There can be no development without peace, no peace without development and neither without respect for human rights and the rule of law. Adequate resources must be devoted to each of those pillars. Our common long-term objective must be a Central African Republic that is secure in its borders, able to conduct its own affairs and provide services to all Central Africans without discrimination and without interference from or dependence on outsiders, where Muslims, Christians and other communities can live peacefully alongside each other, regardless of creed or political affiliation, and play a vibrant role in the political, economic and social life of the country.

107. The deployment of the proposed peacekeeping operation would need, in particular, to go hand in hand with a commitment of the international financial institutions to support the rebuilding of the State, which would include support to rebuilding the financial and banking sectors, including the payment of salaries to civil servants in the immediate term.

108. At the same time, I recommend that a partnership initiative be established between the Government of the Central African Republic and the international community, including the African Union and ECCAS, which would set out key priorities for a recovery and accountability compact based on critical peace and State-building goals. In particular, it will be necessary to strengthen public financial management and accountability in a manner that specifically targets revenue collection, expenditure controls, public procurement and concession practices as part of the rebuilding of the State, along the lines of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme in Liberia.

109. Given the dire conditions and extreme vulnerability of the population, immediate and sustained support for humanitarian operations is equally important. Urgent measures are needed to hold accountable perpetrators of human rights and international humanitarian law violations.

110. I wish to pay tribute to my Special Representative for the Central African Republic, Babacar Gaye, and the staff of BINUCA and the United Nations country team for their continued hard work. I am deeply appreciative of the sacrifice that they are making for the cause of peace in the Central African Republic. I also thank the transitional authorities, the African Union, MISCA troop-contributing countries, ECCAS, the European Union, donor countries and multilateral and non-governmental organizations for their continued efforts to address the crisis in the Central African Republic. We must build on the sense of hope that the Central African people are exhibiting to enhance our partnership and redouble our efforts in support of the people and Government of the Central African Republic.